

LITERARY / READINGS LISTINGS

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INTERSECTION FOR THE ARTS & THE SAN FRANCISCO FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE THE WINNERS OF THE 2007 JACKSON PHELAN TANENBAUM LITERARY AWARDS

Joseph Henry Jackson Award - Peter Nathaniel Mahae of Santa Clara, CA

James Duval Phelan Award - Tung-Hui Hu of San Francisco, CA

Mary Tanenbaum Award – Roxanna Font of San Francisco, CA

Event: Readings by 2007 Jackson Phelan Tanenbaum Literary Award Winners
Peter Nathaniel Mahae, Tung-Hui Hu & Roxanna Font and 2002 Jackson Award winner
Eric Puchner, author of *Music Through The Floor*

Date & Time: Wednesday November 28, 2007, 7:30 P.M.

Location: Intersection for the Arts, 446 Valencia Street (between 15th Street and 16th Street)
Mission District, San Francisco

Cost: \$5 - \$15 (your choice) sliding scale

Information: (415) 626-2787, www.theintersection.org

The distinguished Joseph Henry Jackson, James Duval Phelan, and Mary Tanenbaum Literary Awards, sponsored by The San Francisco Foundation and administered by Intersection for the Arts since 1991, are offered annually in the amount of \$2,000 each to encourage young writers (20 to 35 years old), who are either California-born or currently residing in Northern California or Nevada for an unpublished manuscript-in-progress. 2007 marks the 50th annual Jackson Award, the 70th annual Phelan Award, and the 17th annual Tanenbaum Award in Nonfiction. In addition to \$7,000 cash awards for all three awards, winners receive a framed certificate and their manuscripts will be permanently housed at UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library. Each of the 2007 award winners will read from their award-winning manuscripts. These awards have proven to be instrumental in the career of young writers, many of whom have gone on to securing either literary agents or publishing contracts as a result of these awards. To illustrate the concrete relationship between these awards and their impact on future publication opportunities, 2002 Jackson Award winner Eric Puchner, whose celebrated award-winning short story manuscript "Music Through The Floor" went on to be published by Scribner in 2005, will also be reading from new work.

These are highly competitive awards, with manuscript submissions coming from every region of the United States, including a dozen states and all parts of California. The award-winning manuscripts by Peter Nathaniel Malae, Tung-Hui Hu and Roxanna Font were chosen from over 150 manuscripts of fiction (novels and short stories), poetry, nonfictional prose, graphic novel, and drama. This year's competition was judged by Persis M. Karim, Andrew Leland, and giovanni singleton.

About the namesakes of these awards: Joseph Henry Jackson moved to California after WWI and became editor of *Sunset Magazine* from 1926-28. From 1924-1943 he hosted the radio program "Bookman's Guide," and in 1930 he became literary editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, continuing in that role for the rest of his life and gaining national prominence. He was also the author or editor of some dozen books, often concerning California history. He served on many literary boards, including the O. Henry Memorial Award, the Harper Prize Novel, and the Pulitzer Prize. In his book columns and by personal contact, Jackson was always interested in discovering and encouraging new writers. Appropriately, his friends established the Jackson Award after his death in 1955.

James Duval Phelan was born, raised, and educated in San Francisco before entering the family banking business. In 1897 he ran for mayor of San Francisco, was elected and re-elected twice, gaining a great reputation for drafting a new city charter and beautifying the city through new parks and playgrounds. Later elected to the U.S. Senate, he served as a Democrat from 1915 to 1921. During his lifetime he encouraged and financially aided writers, artists and musicians, for whom he provided very generously through his will after his death in 1930.

Mary Tanenbaum began her career as a journalist after graduating from Stanford in 1936. Her first work was book reviewing with Joseph Henry Jackson for *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and her articles on books, travel, fashion, and personalities have appeared in *The Chronicle*, *The New York Times*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*. The Mary Tanenbaum Award was made permanent in 2000 by her husband Charles in memory of Ms. Tanenbaum's legacy as an author.

About the judges: **Persis M. Karim** has been an Associate Professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at San Jose State University since 1999. She received both her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and her M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. She has been a Visiting Scholar at the California College of the Arts, and has taught at UC Santa Cruz and University of Texas at Austin. She is the editor of *Let Me Tell You Where I've Been: New Writing by Women of the Iranian Diaspora* (University of Arkansas Press, 2006) and co-editor of *A World Between: Poetry, Short Stories, and Essays by Iranian-Americans* (George Braziller, Inc. Publishers, 1999). She has published articles in the *Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Literature* (Greenwood Press, 2005), *Women Without Men* (The Feminist Press, 2004), *Twenty-First Century American Novelists* (Thomson/Gale, 2004), and her poetry in *Alimentum*, *Reed Magazine*, *Caesura: The Journal of the Poetry Center San Jose*, *Heartlodge*, and *Asian American Literature*. Karim has also participated in conferences at the University of Maryland, Santa Clara University, UCLA, University of Pennsylvania, Annual Meeting of the Modern Language Association, University of Utah, and UC Santa Cruz. She is currently working on a collection of essays, *In the Belly of the Great Satan: Art, Literature and the Emergence of Iranian American Identity*. This is Karim's first year serving as a Judge for the Jackson Phelan Tanenbaum Literary Awards.

Andrew Leland is managing editor of *The Believer*, a national monthly literary magazine based in San Francisco that stresses the interconnectivity of books to pop culture, politics, art, and music. He also serves as managing editor of the magazine's imprint, Believer Books. His writing has appeared in *BOMB* magazine and *SF Weekly*. This is Leland's third consecutive year serving as a Judge for the Jackson Phelan Tanenbaum Literary Awards.

giovanni singleton received her MFA in Creative Writing from New College of California and her B.A. in Communications/Print Journalism from The American University. She has been a visiting writer at California State University of Los Angeles, Writer in Residence at School of the Arts in San Francisco, Instructor at St. Mary's College, and a teacher with WritersCorps in San Francisco. She is the founding editor of *nocturnes (re)view of the literary arts*, and has published her own work in the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, *Five Fingers Review*, *Callaloo*, *Fence*, *Chain*, *Proliferation*, and *MIRAGE #4/PERIOD(ICAL)*. She has served on the Board of Directors at The Poetry Center and Archives at San Francisco State University and Small Press Traffic Literary Arts Center. She was a Fellow at the Squaw Valley Community of Writers Poetry Workshop, a visiting writer at Cave Canem: A Workshop for African-American Poets, a Fellow at The Virginia Commonwealth University's Zora Neal Hurston/Richard Wright Poetry Workshop, and was a recipient of a New Langton Arts Bay Area Award for Literature. This is singleton's first year serving as a Judge for the Jackson Phelan Tanenbaum Literary Awards.

About the winners: **Peter Nathaniel Malae** is the author of *Teach the Free Man* (Swallow Press), a book Russell Banks called "as good a collection of stories as (he's) read in years." Peter's prose and poetry have appeared in *Cimarron Review*, *Missouri Review*, *Witness*, *ZYZZYVA*, and a host of other magazines across the nation, earning distinguished recognition in the Best American Essays and Best American Mysteries series, in addition to three Pushcart Prize nominations. He is a 2007 John Steinbeck Fellow.

Tung-Hui Hu is the author of *Mine* (Ausable, 2007) and *The Book of Motion* (University of Georgia, 2003). His poems have been published in *The New Republic*, *Ploughshares*, *AGNI*, *Guernica*, and other magazines, and featured on *Poetry Daily* and *Martha Stewart Living Radio*. A MacDowell Colony Fellow, Hu received his BA from Princeton and his MFA from the University of Michigan. He lives in San Francisco, where he writes on film and new media.

Roxanna Font holds a BA from the University of Michigan and an MFA from New York University. She is the recipient of writing residencies from the Hedgebrook Writers' Retreat, The Djerassi Resident Artists Program, as well as a Steinbeck Fellowship. Former editor-in-chief of *Washington Square* and a founding editor of *The Bellevue Literary Review*, she was the associate publisher of *Limelight Editions* in New York before relocating to San Francisco, where she is now the managing editor of *Counterpoint Press*.

Eric Puchner teaches at Stanford University, where he was a Wallace Stegner and John L'Heureux Fellow. His short stories have appeared in *The Chicago Tribune*, *Zoetrope: All Story*, *The Missouri Review*, *Glimmer Train*, *Best New American Voices 2005*, and other journals and anthologies. He has won a Pushcart Prize in 2004 and the Joseph Henry Jackson Award in 2002 for *Music Through the Floor*, which was published by Scribner in 2005 and received several critical accolades, including *The New York Times Book Review*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*'s "Editor's Choice," selection as a BookSense Notable pick, a *Borders Original Voices* selection, *Best New American Voices 2005*. He lives in San Francisco with his wife, novelist Katharine Noel.

The citation for **Peter Nathaniel Malae**'s 2007 Joseph Henry Jackson Award winning fiction manuscript, "What We Are" reads:

Paul, the narrator of "What We Are," is a self-consciously literary hero: he compares himself to Huck Finn, Raskolnikov, Camus' Stranger. He is alienated from the world and its inhabitants, painfully trying to understand who he is. But when has the standard existential protagonist ever been a furious, streetwise, totally sober half-Samoan ex-con in flip-flops and a beanie, cruising the Peninsula after dark on a mountain bike? The goal of Paul's ramblings is to understand his own identity, to figure out what it means to be an American, and to understand if these questions might have the same answer. The novel is suffused with this confusion and blending of identity. Each scene is a roiling melting pot, whether it's the mix of people eating in a Jack-in-the-Box at 3 am, the "fiesta debris" littering a park in the rain at night, or the turbulent swirl within Paul himself. The American identity he's searching for is broken and contradictory: "I, an American of this new century, am under the impression that ... no position is worth my life," he writes. "Now I wonder if my life is worth nothing because I've no position." This emptiness makes Paul a screen onto which the rest of the novel's characters project their own fears; it makes him into a sort of twenty-first century Polynesian *Invisible Man*. Like Ellison's *Invisible Man*, Paul is filled with rage at his fellow Americans, but he also implicates himself. "I am the ultimate anti-epiphany," he writes. "The new American." It is this self-interrogation--mixed with overwhelming anger--that prevents the novel from devolving into self-righteousness and didacticism. It gives the reader the sense that if Paul can figure out who he is, then he'll have figured it out for the rest of us, too.

- 2007 Panel of Judges: Persis M. Karim, Andrew Leland & giovanni singleton

The citation for **Tung-Hui Hu**'s 2007 James Duval Phelan Award winning poetry manuscript, "Greenhouses, Lighthouses" reads:

Tung-Hui Hu's "Greenhouses, Lighthouses," a collection of poems deftly informed by film and visual culture, is a well-crafted testament to the power of illumination. Through a porous sense of line, light enters and navigates the journey across diverse terrain, be it Los Angeles or Iowa, Genesis or Revelations, land or sea. Poems such as "The Gleaners and I," "Basic Divination Exercises for Seeing the Future," and "What Was Rationed," remind us that light and shadow are interdependent. One by one, the poems unfold at angles juxtaposed so as to uncover life's already existing odd complexity. The poems in this collection also seem to follow the trajectory of flight: taxiing, take-off, cruise altitude, descent, and landing; the last of which often seems to occur in unimagined places mostly inside of ourselves. Hu's writing exhibits an alchemical yet materially sound sensibility that challenges what we think we know and undermines what we want to believe. Language is skillfully employed to navigate the tightrope between freedom and captivity as in the line "To pull apart until you hear others think..." Herein too, one finds a carefully wrought emotional arc developed much like how architects construct buildings. "Greenhouses, Lighthouses" is a provocative gesture toward cinematography. Ironic. Engaging. Surreal. Human. A radiant offering for our times.

- 2007 Panel of Judges: Persis M. Karim, Andrew Leland & giovanni singleton

The citation for **Roxanna Font's** 2007 Mary Tanenbaum Award winning nonfiction manuscript, "The Fig Tree" reads:

In her compelling manuscript of nonfiction "The Fig Tree," Roxanna Font illuminates the complex process of piecing together not just the disparate threads of the narrative of her Cuban-American family, but also of trying to claim ownership of that narrative, and by extension, her connection to the island nation of Cuba. Through the discovery of her deceased great-grandmother Elisa's poetry and letters, Roxanna attempts to understand and intervene in a narrative fraught with the politics and rhetoric of post-revolutionary, anti-Castro Cuba which has left little room for her own voice. Her Grandmother's writings, including a narrative of a fig tree she'd planted in her yard in the town of Holguin prior to the revolution, become the focus of Roxanna's musings on a Cuba forbidden and out of reach to her because of both the embargo and because of her family's departure during Castro's revolution which has caused them to read Cuba through the singularized lens of communism. The author explores the complexities of her own softer sense of "betrayal" by that island nation, and eventually she is able to travel to Cuba as part of a theatre troupe performing throughout the island. This return to the homeland enables her to confront her own assumptions and nostalgia (made more pronounced in her grandmother's writings) and to seek a bridge between the Cuba of her family's past and the Cuba that exists today. This is a project that works to recuperate the complexities of immigration and exile and to mine the fragmentary family narrative that is the product of a larger social and historical upheaval.

- 2007 Panel of Judges: Persis M. Karim, Andrew Leland & Giovanni Singleton

Intersection for the Arts, established in 1965, is San Francisco's oldest alternative art space and provides a place where provocative ideas, diverse art forms, artists and audiences can intersect one another. At Intersection, experimentation and risk are possible, debate and critical inquiry are embraced, community is essential, resources and experience are democratized, and today's issues are thrashed about in the heat and immediacy of live art.

The San Francisco Foundation (TSFF) is the community foundation serving the Bay Area since 1948 with current assets of more than \$1 billion. Through the generosity and vision of our family of donors, TSFF awarded grants totaling \$89 million in fiscal year 2007. Bringing together donors and building on community assets through grant making, leveraging, public policy, advocacy, and leadership development, TSFF addresses community needs in the areas of community health, education, arts and culture, community development, and the environment. The San Francisco Foundation is a community foundation serving San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, and San Mateo Counties.